

Exodus 33

Verses 1 - 3

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give it.’ ² I will send an angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. ³ *Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, because you are an obstinate people, and I might destroy you on the way.”

² I will send an angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. ³ *Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, because you are an obstinate people, and I might destroy you on the way.”

Moses and God had both punished Israel for their actions but this matter was not resolved at this point. Making a false god and worshipping it after all that God had done for them was an act of rebellion and God wanted them to know that He was not ready to overlook what they had done.

Verses 4 - 6

⁴ When the people heard this sad word, they went into mourning, and none of them put on his ornaments. ⁵ For the Lord had said to Moses, “Say to the sons of Israel, ‘You are an obstinate people; should I go up in your midst for one moment, I would destroy you.’ Now therefore, put off your ornaments from you, that I may know what I shall do with you.” ⁶ So the sons of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb *onward*.

This was a critical time for the nation of Israel. They had made mistakes in the past but God was always willing to forgive them and they proceeded on. But this time, they had turned their back on God and worshipped an idol. This act broke the covenant that had been ratified back in chapter 24. It had only lasted 40 days!

God was so upset that He was unwilling to be in their midst because He was afraid that He might destroy them.

Verses 7 - 11

⁷ Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. ⁸ And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. ⁹ Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the Lord would speak with Moses.

¹⁰ When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. ¹¹ Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

⁷ Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp.

Moses had his private dwelling, his home, in the midst of the people but he had this other tent outside the camp that served as a meeting place with God. God would appear to Moses and talk with him face to face. In this way Moses was privileged far above any other prophets of the Old Testament.

The people had alienated themselves from the Lord, but those who sought Him were given an opportunity to approach Him.

⁸ And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent.

With such a large group of people, the tent must have been on a high area so all the people could see Moses.

⁹ Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the Lord would speak with Moses.

This pillar first appeared when God lead Israel out of Egypt and now it was a sign that God was talking with Moses.

¹⁰ When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent.

Despite the obvious rift between the Lord and the people, they showed their reverence for the Lord's presence by worshipping Him.

¹¹ Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

This tent of meeting remained even after the Tabernacle was completed.

See Numbers 12:5 – 8

⁴ And the Lord suddenly said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, “You three go out to the tent of meeting.” So the three of them went out. ⁵ Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent; and He called Aaron and Miriam.

The Tabernacle was set up on 1-1-02 (1445 BC). Chapter 12:5 - 8 is 2 months after that point in time.

See pic 3305

Numbers time line

Numbers	Event	Year 2 - 1445	Place
9	Passover	1-14-02	The Desert of Sinai
1:1	Census	2-1-02	The Desert of Sinai
10:11	At Sinai for almost 11 months	2-20-02	Leave Sinai
11	Quail / 70 Elders		Kibroth-hattaavah
12	Miriam and Aaron oppose Moses		Hazereth
12:16	Arrive at Kadesh-barnea	3-2-02	At Kadesh
13	Explore Canaan	40 days	At Kadesh
14	The people rebel	4th month	At Kadesh
14:44-45	Defeated by Amorites	4th month	Hill country

There could be several reasons why Joshua remained at the tent of meeting after Moses returned to the camp.

1. God did not want the tent of meeting to be unattended.
2. Since Joshua would replace Moses as the leader of Israel God wanted him to be fully informed about all of their (God and Moses) discussions.

Verses 12 - 17

¹² Then Moses said to the Lord, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people!’ But **You Yourself have not let me know whom You will send with me.** Moreover, You have said, ‘I have known you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.’” ¹³ Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, **let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight.** Consider too, that **this nation is Your people.**” ¹⁴ And He said, “**My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.**” ¹⁵ Then he said to Him, “If Your presence does not go *with us*, do not lead us up from here. ¹⁶ For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the *other* people who are upon the face of the earth?” ¹⁷ The Lord said to Moses, “**I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name.**”

Moses voices three concerns that he has and God answers him.

Concern 1.

You have not let me know whom You will send with me.

God's answer.

My presence shall go with you.

Concern 2.

Let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight

God's answer.

You have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name.

The fact that God talked with Moses face to face was an indication that Moses had found favor in God's sight.

Concern 3.

This nation is Your people.

God's answer.

God said He would be with Moses but He had not promised to be with Israel because He was still displeased with them. So Moses says Israel cannot be the chosen nation if God doesn't show His favor for them before the other nations.

This is when The Lord said to Moses, I will also do this thing of which you have spoken.

The separation between God and Israel was finally over because Moses had a special relationship with God and he had interceded for Israel once again.

Verses 18 - 23

¹⁸ Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" ¹⁹ And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." ²⁰ But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" ²¹ Then the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand *there* on the rock; ²² and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."

¹⁸ Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!"

Doesn't it seem like Moses had already seen more of God's glory than any human should expect to witness in this life and he is asking for more?

He talked with God regularly at the tent of meeting and he saw the glory of God along with the 70 elders in Exodus 24:9 - 11.

⁹ Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself.

What Moses had experienced up to this point led him to ask for an even greater understanding of God's glory and God was willing to grant his request. Jesus did say, "Ask and you shall receive".

¹⁹ And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.”

God was about to bless Moses (**be gracious to him**) in a way that very few humans will ever experience in this life. God had also forgiven the people of Israel for their sin (**showing them compassion**) which they did not merit.

²⁰ But He said, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!”

Paul says that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Only after we have been given our new spiritual body will we be able to see God.

²¹ Then the Lord said, “Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand *there* on the rock; ²² and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by.

²³ Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.”

The Glory of God is so great that Moses needed to be shielded from His glory or he would have died.